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## THE NEW GOLD FIELDS.

*Their Mineral and Agricultural Resources as Indicative of their Future Wealth.*

**Two Million Dollars In Gold from the Black Hills Placers in the Season of 1876—The Peculiarly Rich Characteristics of their Mineral Veins so Far as Exploited.**

**PROBABLE COST OF LIVING IN THE HILLS DURING THE FOLLOWING SEASON—THE INDIAN QUESTION—CHANCES FOR ACQUIRING CLAIMS, ETC.  
THE BEST ROUTE.**

### *Special Correspondence.*

DEADWOOD CITY, DAKOTA, January 14, 1877.

"History repeats itself." Nature in all her processes evolves only circles. Human life in the individual, in the race, and in the succession of generations, repeats the historic major and minor rounds. The pursuits and ambitions of men still follow the ancient ways, and the old and misty story of the Golden Fleece, of Jason and his Argonauts, is revived with better or similar fortune (how often since '49) among the glittering treasure rocks and sands of the mountain regions of our American great west, by the adventurous navigators of the "prairie schooner." Of this new El Dorado the golden glow and glory, if it shines splendidly afar, is not a false splendor. It is not destined to pale its radiance nor to go out again into the darkness and obscurity in which these fire-ravaged hills have so long been waiting to yield up their accumulating gold. If it intoxicates the active and restless spirits of the east, or kindles a new ardor and excitement among the hardened and experienced miners of the west, it is not a delirium, the awakening from which must be in deep ointment, disaster, or death. For the Black Hills are exceeding rich. California, Montana, Nevada, Colorado, have had and still have their gold and silver marvels. The country is familiar with the finding of the precious metals. Antiquity in the mining regions is soon reached. No matter how narrated, with what enthusiastic or gorgeous description, the stories are already old. But let the comparison be made with any gold discoveries with which the world is familiar—I weigh my words—the Black Hills are exceeding rich. There is much gold in them, so much as shall revive astonishment, now difficult to arouse, for I believe the familiar wonders of other regions may be surpassed in the development of the Black Hills. The old California and Montana miners believe this to be so, and declare it to be the obvious truth. They are astonished in the first instance at the plain evidences which the apparent geology of the hills presents, for schistose rock and fine laminated mica and talcose slates of the same peculiar geological age were before unknown to them as surface cropping, and in the second place, exploitation had never before developed fissures in which there was no segregated gang, but in which every pound of the vein matter, in lodes varying from 10 to 40 feet in thickness, proved to be pay ore suitable to be run through the mills without assorting. Exactly such are the Black Hills lodes so far as prospected, and many of the surface characteristics of the Hills are precisely those of the eleven hundred foot level in the famous Comstock lode.

Notwithstanding the favorable reports from the superficial examinations of Gen. Custer, and from Prof. JENNETT's investigations, also favorable, but so incomplete and partial as to be almost valueless, the press of the country, recalling some disastrous experiences elsewhere, refused to recognize any great possibilities in the Hills, and continued to regard them with auspicious or adverse notice. Early last year many experienced gold seekers and adventurers from the east, attracted by the fame of the new gold fields, arrived but to remain a short time, then turned homeward in disappointment and disgust, and with fluent curses denounced the Black Hills as the vilest of frauds. But experienced or prudent observers, once here, waited. The California and Montana miner generally remained. The Californians, not familiar with placer diggings of a similar character, and only partially successful, still felt undiminished confidence from the general characteristics of the country. But the Montana miners had acquired a practice in fields not very unlike these, which left them less to learn, and on Deadwood gulch first demonstrated the actual wealth of the Hills. To the Montana men belongs the credit of proving the new El Dorado. Some of them are no longer here, but they left loaded with gold. Despite the very great secrecy observed by the successful miners, both those who have carried their gains to the states and still carefully main-

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tained by those who remain, it is a known fact that Deadwood gulch from No. 20 below Discovery claim to No. 9 above (as far as this gulch is yet proved) is quite the richest diggings that lucky men have ever struck in the whole history of placer mining. The major portion of the gold taken out by the Wheeler party, variously estimated here at from \$2,600,000 to \$500,000, but the mass of which it is quite certain weighed 1,900 pounds, was mined from claim No. 2, above Discovery. This in five months. But No. 2 was not exhausted. The purchasers of this claim for \$3,000, as is well known, took out the purchase money in the first week, and it is still a largely productive and valuable property. I myself knew \$2,800 to be panned out of claim No. 6 above in two shifts; that is, 42 hours. And in general the claims on Deadwood, from 16 below to 9 above Discovery, average from \$300 to \$700 a shift of 12 hours. On Whitewood gulch, both below and above Deadwood, very rich diggings have also been struck. The hydraulic works with California giant now being placed on upper Whitewood will insure a largely increased yield next season. Speaking within safe limits, the Black Hills have produced during the season of 1876, from June to November, \$2,000,000 in gold. Many competent and not over enthusiastic men here estimate the yield as high as \$3,000,000. Whichever figure is nearer correct, probably the former, Deadwood and Whitewood gulches have produced nearly the entire amount.

I said the yield of the Black Hills during the past season was certainly \$2,000,000 in gold. It must necessarily be an estimate, and a difficult one as to accuracy. The outgoing and remaining miners have observed great secrecy. There were many rather needy-looking and forlorn-looking men in the Hills, on claims not underwritten except by themselves, who during last summer and fall, questioned about their diggings, would reply, "Well, we're making wages," but whom this winter have proved to be the possessors of considerable dust. Fully one-fifth of the gold mined in the Hills in the season of 1876 is still here, and is or will be employed in the purchase of mining properties and machinery. The sum thus represented can scarcely be less than \$400,000. The First National Bank of Cheyenne and Stebbins, Post & Co., of that city, have bought during the past season \$900,000 of Black Hills gold. The Wheeler party carried east with them \$400,000. Frequent amounts of from \$5,000 to \$20,000 have been conveyed through Cheyenne to the states by their owners, often to avoid all brokerage, directly to the mint in Philadelphia, and considerable additional amounts have left here via the Fort Pierre route. It is thus within certainly safe limits to place the gross yield at \$2,000,000. This production has been entirely from the placers. On Battle creek, Castle creek, Spring creek, French creek, Rapid creek, Sand creek, Gold run, and in Bothal, False Bottom, Blacktail, Whitewood, Deadwood, and Potato, gulches, gold has been found in paying quantities. Of these the richest, so far as known or proved, are Spring, Rapid, and French creeks, and Whitewood, Deadwood, and Potato gulches.

Of discovered quartz lodes and to some extent prospected are Chief of the Hills, Hidden Treasure, De Smet, Belcher, Golden Gate, Golden Terry, Home Stake, Old Abe, Amicus, Clark, Palmetto, and others. The best of lodes named has shed the major part of the gold of Deadwood and Whitewood gulches. Quartz-mining was first commenced the 13th day of August last in the Chief of the Hills mine by Messrs. French and Chase, of whom, to the intelligence, thorough observation, and liberal expenditure of the former and practical knowledge of the latter, the Black Hills lodes largely owe such development as they have. The first ton of rock taken from the Chief of the Hills, ground in a Mexican arastræ, yielded \$38. This original ton of rock is the only ore from this mine which has been reduced, though the vein (nearly horizontal) has been tunneled to a depth of more than 100 feet. The first mill introduced into the Hills was a Bolhoff Ball Pulverizer, which commenced grinding rock from the Hidden Treasure mine, owned by the Black Hills Gold Mining Company, Wednesday, Oct. 11, 1876. Assays of selected ore from some of the mines mentioned above have run as high as \$14,000 to the ton. This, however, is a fact of little significance, as it is the quantity of gold-bearing ore in the fissure, and not high assays of culled rock, that determine its wealth. I do not wish to call attention to particular mines. None of these properties are for sale. Elevation and secrecy is the prudent policy of the owners, made so by the not firmly established condition of the country up to the present time. It is a policy which I have no right to violate. But I may mention the fact, as an instance, that from the Hidden Treasure 200 tons of rock just as it came from the mine (all from that mine that has so far been reduced), yielded by amalgamation, saving about 75 per cent. of the gold, \$50 to the ton. Generally the entire vein matter of the Black Hills lodes now opened averages from \$30 to \$50 to the ton. The fissure contents are often an oxide of iron solidified by infiltration of silica, apparently a cement, very hard, and carrying free gold in dust flour and nuggets. These are horizontal veins. The perpendicular lodes are quartz (silica and hematite) equally rich in free gold, but sometimes contain arsenical iron. I have seen but one mine in which the extent of the fissure has been disclosed. It is a perpendicular vein of forty feet in width, apparently the entire contents are gold bearing in paying quantities suitable to run through the mill without assortment. Certainly this is the fact with regard to other lodes so far as they have been proved, generally having but one wall exposed. One experienced miner familiar with this rock can pan from the ore of some of these lodes, pulverizing it with a mortar and pestle, \$15 per day. From a certain prospect ten ounces of ore gave \$6.20 in gold without any "spitting in the pan." There are hundreds of like instances. Of themselves they are not of sufficient significance, but when it is considered that so far as proved the entire vein matter of these lodes carries gold in paying quantities, with fissures of from ten to forty feet in width, it must justify a good deal of enthusiasm and confidence with regard to the Black Hills. The means of ore reduction have heretofore been small, few mills being here owned by the proprietors of the mines. I venture the statement which nobody here would ridicule, that there is ore enough from surfaces now uncovered in the Black Hills to feed fifty 100-stamp mills 20 years. It cannot be long before independent mills will be introduced, thus establishing a general market for the ore. I am not writing to inflame the public mind, I have no interest or wish to do that, and am restrained from entering into details by the considerations mentioned above, but the revelations of 1877 will prove my opinion of the new Eldorado to be moderate. Indeed, the purpose of this letter was not to descant on the wealth of the Hills, of which, still exercising self-restraint, I have written more than I intended, but to give through THE TIMES some probably valuable hints and information to those who contemplate coming here, which one who knows something of the situation might suggest.

## THE EXTENT OF THE MINERAL BELT

of the Black Hills, speaking in the light of known facts only, is about 100 miles in length, with an average width of from ten to fifteen miles. It is a subject about which there is some dispute as to what part of this gold region is in Wyoming and what part in Dakota, the 104th meridian never having been run, I believe, farther north than the north boundary line of Nebraska. By some it is maintained that Deadwood will be found to be west of the 104th meridian, and consequently in Wyoming territory. But the section of the Hills is generally accepted as being in Dakota, and Dakota laws prevail.

## THE CHANCES FOR ACQUIRING CLAIMS

form a question of interest to the intending immigrant. But a very small portion of the Black Hills has been prospected, and consequently but little is yet absolutely known of them, speaking with reference to their entire extent. Throughout the entire mineral belt the characteristics of the surface rock indicate a similar geological age, a peculiar age of schists, mica and talcose slates significant to the miner. It is a reasonable doubt it is a certain inference from what is known that new discoveries likely to be as important as any yet made will follow their further exploration. It may be stated with certainty that the opportunities for prospecting and locating new gold-quartz lodes are indefinitely numerous. As to gulch mining, what are now understood to be the best discovered paying gulches are staked and claimed. Even on them there will be advantageous opportunities to acquire properties by purchase, especially under the influence of the excitement of new discoveries. On the creeks and gulches of lesser reputation properties no doubt valuable, often richly so, in some cases, have been and will be abandoned by their owners, in others may be bought for comparatively trifling sums. And new discoveries of rich placer diggings are probable occurrences. The situation may be summed up to prevent opportunities indefinitely numerous for locating rich lodes, and fair chances for getting hold of valuable placers. In the main, these observations apply to experienced miners, and to prudent, discerning men with more or less capital. To those who come here without experience, or capital which to avail themselves of the experience of others, the situation will be found to be not very different from what it has always been in all new mining countries. For such men there are chances, more remote, it is true, but often in the end, quite as certain. They depend, however, as a rule, on the character of the men. An industrious, resolute and observant man will be assured of good pay for his time and labor, and in the succession of opportunities his rapidly acquired experience will enable him to profit. The Black Hills is a good country, but of themselves men must be their own judges.

## AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES OF THE HILLS.

These are great. On the approach are the general characteristics of the plains as to nature and quality of soil, with evidences, however, of more frequent and regular rainfall here than elsewhere. Within the Hills region the valleys are surpassingly fertile, the rainfall as regular and constant throughout the year as in the states east of the Mississippi. There are great agricultural possibilities here, but lest I be suspected of overstating them, I shall not express all that confidence in the fertility of such valleys as the Rapid, Spearfish, and Belle Fourche, which I believe the future of this country will justify. In them will be found scope for profitable employment by many immigrants to these gold fields of enduring wealth.

## THE INDIAN QUESTION.

The readers of THE TIMES will have lately learned that the renewal of the Indian war in the ensuing spring is becoming more and more improbable. So many of the Indians having already joined the forces of the government and others constantly being brought in, may be reasonably expected to have the effect of demoralizing the hostiles and inducing the return to peace of the most outstanding bands of Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull. This is now the prevalent opinion among army officers. But whether so or not, the route to the Black Hills will be attended in the absence of prudent policy among the immigrants with some risk from the Indians. If the war be renewed the risk will scarcely be greater than if not, for the route of the immigrants would not be its theatre, while the very fact of its existence would ensure that precautionary policy which should in either case be maintained. If it is not renewed, the younger, turbulent and ambitious spirits among the hordes of thieving and lying rascals, are likely to disregard pledges and treaties, and scour the plains in search of ill-defended scalps and booty. Many Black Hillers would prefer to see hostilities recommenced and the Indian scare kept up. They are perfectly secure from molestation here and are not quite ready to divide the crumbs of this region with a new army of immigrants. Of the present discoveries the cream is not all skimmed yet, and new rich discoveries are regarded as certain. If the immigration into the Black Hills shall be directed and controlled by certain obvious considerations of policy, the Indian difficulty, with or without war, will cease to be a deterrent, will be substantially divested of risk, and need hinder no man. I will allude in detail to these considerations in discussing below the question of route.

## COST OF LIVING, PROVISIONS, ETC., IN THE HILLS.

At Deadwood City good day board has, during the past season, ranged from \$7 to \$10 per week. The price cannot exceed the lesser figure during the next season. For specific information, I append a table of probable prices at Deadwood City from and after the opening of the spring of the present year. It is the uniform opinion of the best-informed persons, both freighters themselves and others, that freights from Cheyenne to Deadwood will then be as low as \$3 per 100 pounds. They have heretofore ruled much higher, and are now as high as from 8 to 10 cents per pound. The general facts of the situation must this year lead to a very great reduction in freights, and it may doubtless be safely assumed that the rate will be as low as three cents per pound. Last year the freighters made all the money in goods and supplies, and our merchants here made nothing. The latter lost money, and many of them were cleaned out and broken up. Neither the merchants nor freighters are likely to make very large margins during the season of 1877. The following table is prepared on the basis of the full retail prices of the articles at Cheyenne, adding

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to each item an amount sufficient to cover the cost of freight, together with a fair margin for the resident dealer. Without of course affirming absolute accuracy in each instance, the general information it contains may be regarded as reliable.

Labor, per day.....	\$3 00 @ 4 00
Lumber, per m. (sawn in the Hills).....	35 00
Wood, per cord.....	3 50 @ 4 00
Flour, per sack, (100 pounds).....	6 75 @ 7 50
Corn, per pound.....	05
Sugar, per pound (best).....	20
Coffee, per pound (best).....	30
Tea, per pound (best).....	1 05
Salt, per pound.....	06
Beans, per pound.....	10
Bacon, per pound.....	17
Bacon, per pound.....	22
Vinegar, per gallon.....	55
Candles, per box (40 pounds).....	9 50
Powder, per keg.....	5 75
Fuse, per 1,000 feet.....	14 00
Sheet copper, per pound.....	55
Nails, per pound, rates.....	10
Iron, per pound, rates.....	10
Sheet iron, per pound, rates.....	12
Quicksilver, per pound (variable).....	90
Cast oil, per gallon.....	1 25
Lard oil, per gallon.....	3 00
Shovels.....	1 25 @ 1 75
Picks.....	1 2 @ 3 25
Bellows, 36-inch.....	25 00
Anvils, per pound.....	25
Hoe, per pound.....	23

The cost of clothing, boots and shoes, etc., will be at prices correspondingly greater than those at Cheyenne, these articles being in the latter city but very little higher than generally in the states east of the Missouri.

## THE QUESTION OF ROUTE TO THE BLACK HILLS

is one of special importance to the immigrant. Very obvious reasons will at once occur why as large a portion of the immigration as is practicable

## SHOULD SEEK ONE AND THE SAME ROUTE.

The greater the thoroughfare the more perfect the facilities for outfit, travel, and convenience, comfort, safety, and economy of the journey. Without having the least personal interest in or prejudice in favor of any one of the routes to which public attention has been directed, if there be a decided preference among them I feel bound to state it. Of all routes, that from Cheyenne is emphatically the best in every respect, save the single one of distance in miles, and if distance be considered with respect to expedition, it is the shortest route. I am aware that I shall excite the animosity of those who are interested in other, though they cannot be called rival routes. But what of it? I am attempting to give the immigrant information of value and which is essential. If for good and manifest reasons there be a preferable route to the Black Hills, the public ought to know it. The Cheyenne route is the best route because, 1st. It is now the principal thoroughfare and is certain to remain so. Probably 75 per cent. of the freight and travel to the Black Hills last season was from Cheyenne. It is also the chief route of the government supply trains. Four government forts and military encampments are located on it, viz., at Fort Laramie (where a free government iron bridge crosses the North Platte), at Rawhide Buttes, at Sage Creek, and at Red Canon. 2d. It is the only route along the entire length of which there is an ample supply of wood, water and grass. This is the testimony of every army officer with whom I have conversed. Speaking from personal knowledge, they for this and other reasons assign a decided preference to the Cheyenne route. It is also the testimony of men generally who are familiar with the different routes. 3d. It is the route of the telegraph to the Black Hills connecting Deadwood and Cheyenne, and therefore for this as well as other reasons a line of communication which must be guarded and kept open by the military authorities. 4th. It is the route of the best organized transportation companies and stage lines who have employed huge capital in the means of frequent and rapid passage, and in the establishment of convenient stations at distances of from 10 to 15 miles apart, along the route. Small parties arriving at Cheyenne and preferring to cross with their own outfit will be subjected to no delay in joining themselves to larger parties adequate for self-defense against any bands of Indian outlaws who may be abroad. And that is a measure of prudence which it will be dangerous to disregard.

Most of the immigration will be during the first two or three months of the season. If it shall be chiefly concentrated on one route, as doubtless it will be, it would be subject to no danger from Indian disturbances. Cheyenne is the convenient point of departure for substantially the entire country by the access to it of the Union Pacific railroad. It is also an advantageous point of outfit for the purchase of horses, goods, and provisions. Prices generally are but at a slight advance from those in the states east of the Missouri. By the new road to be completed April 1 the distance will be shortened fully 60 miles, and very much of the mountain travel avoided. The Black Hills and Cheyenne Stage company will run double daily, accomplishing the distance in from 48 to 60 hours. The coupon tickets of this company will be sold in most or all of the eastern cities.

TO THE GOLD FIELDS  
—OF THE—  
**BLACK HILLS!**  
VIA  
**OMAHA & SIDNEY, or CHEYENNE.**

THE  
**UNION PACIFIC R. R.**  
OFFERS THE QUICKEST, SAFEST AND MOST RELIABLE ROUTE  
**TO THE NEW ELDORADO !**

By it you avoid the SNOWS of the FAR NORTH, the BAD LANDS of Eastern and Northern Dakota, and the dangers and delays of Missouri River navigation. By it you secure all rail transportation to Sidney or Cheyenne, from which points fast Stage Lines convey you to the Hills over good Government roads and under the protection of the military stationed along the route.

These are the ONLY LINES running STAGES into the Hills. These are the routes by which nine-tenths of the people now in the Hills have gone there. These routes are used EXCLUSIVELY by business men and others from the Hills returning to the States for the purchase of goods, etc. These are the only routes along which Telegraph Lines to the Hills have been constructed. The only routes over which Government mails are carried. The only routes open the whole year. The only routes having Stage Stations, Supply Depots, Wood, Water and Grass, along their whole length.

**ALL THE GOLD**

(amounting to millions), which has been shipped from the Hills has come by these routes, they being the only ones by which it could be SAFELY transported. These are the only routes that offer First Class Transportation through to the Hills. With good roads and weather, the Stage trip can be made in

 **48 HOURS !**

These routes are the QUICKEST, SAFEST, BEST, and taking into account, Speed, Comfort and Safety, they are

**BY FAR THE CHEAPEST !**

The Cheyenne Line is now running Daily Stages and has ample equipment for a double daily service when needed. The Sidney Line will run Daily Stages after April 15th, and will increase its facilities as rapidly as may be required. The wagon transportation from these points is sufficient for any number of third class passengers that may offer.

These are the ONLY routes which it has been possible to operate during the winter. The short season during which other routes can be kept open will prevent the investment there of the large amounts of capital in Stages, Stations, Supply Depots, Bridges, &c., necessary to enable parties going to the Hills to make the trip without hardship.

**DO NOT BE DECEIVED !**

By circulars of other routes offering lower rates or equal accommodations. Stage transportation, first and second class, with rates named for each, was advertised throughout the country, during the whole of last year, and is still advertised, *by two routes on which not a single Stage has ever been run.* IT IS NOT POSSIBLE to give on routes open only during the summer months equal accommodations for the same money with those furnished by lines in operation the entire year.

Through Tickets and the Reduced Through Rates, via either Sidney or Cheyenne, can ONLY BE SECURED by buying tickets via OMAHA and the

**UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD !**

Parties not ticketed via Omaha must pay local Stage Fare from Sidney or Cheyenne, as the Stage Companies have refused to accept any through tickets not sold over the Union Pacific Railroad, and have also declined to grant the reduced through rates to any person, except purchasers of through tickets over the U. P. R. R.

For further information, call on or address

**I. S. HODSDON, General Agent,**  
60 Clark Street, Chicago.

**F. KNOWLAND, General Agent,**  
287 Broadway, New York.

**W. P. COOLEY, Traveling Agent,**  
Chicago.

**F. L. GRAMMER, Traveling Agent,**  
New York.

Or, **THOS. L. KIMBALL,**  
Gen'l Passenger and Ticket Agent, Omaha, Neb.